

**Missouri Division of Tourism
FY12 Marketing Plan
October 7, 2011**

In the Missouri Division of Tourism's strategic planning process, one clear goal rose to the top: "Position the state to compete more effectively for travel and tourism market share during the next decade."

A comprehensive and focused marketing plan will provide the Missouri Division of Tourism and its partners (vendors and industry) a clearer path to growing ROI for the state of Missouri. The following tactics will expand and build on the objectives outlined in the 2011-2013 Strategic Plan.

Objective A:

Enhance the State's desirability as a visitor destination through increasingly innovative marketing strategies.

Goals

1. Maintain Missouri's placement among top 15 states for visitation nationally.
2. Rank in the top 3 states for visitation regionally.
3. Overcome Tennessee in terms of visitation ranking.

Tactics

1. Target niche market segments that offer opportunities for growth.

Through research and travel patterns, several niche audiences have been identified as targets for growth opportunity:

- a. African Americans - Markets in MO and eight surrounding states in DMAs that over-index for African Americans will receive targeted messaging. The Missouri Division of Tourism will partner with a vendor who specializes in urban and African American marketing, to assist in developing and implementing a more detailed strategy for this audience.
- b. Civil War enthusiasts – As the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in Missouri continues throughout FY12, the Missouri Division of Tourism will continue to promote the Civil War sites, attractions and events.

Missouri is ranked 3rd in the number of battles seen within the state. Because of this, Missouri has a rich Civil War history, and is host to many battlefields, monuments and cemeteries that document the war and honor those who fought.

Through concentrated marketing efforts, MDT will work to grow the number of visitors who travel to Missouri to visit Civil War-related events and attractions through the following:

- Participation on the Missouri Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission
- Promotion of Civil War-related sites, attractions and events on VisitMO.com, on VisitMO social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and the VisitMO Bistro blog, in the Missouri Travel Guide, in Missouri Tourism email blasts and in the Civil War brochure
- Select advertising mediums as deemed appropriate, which may include but is not limited to, print magazines, website banners, newspapers, etc.
- Continued support of DMOs and destinations that qualify for matching funds through the MDT Civil War Sesquicentennial Promotion Program.

c. Outdoor enthusiasts – Missouri’s broad offerings in outdoor recreation create a natural target audience in outdoor enthusiasts. With 85 state parks and historic sites, and more than 200,000 acres available to the public, the outdoor tourism product in the state is a highly relevant topic for the Missouri Division of Tourism to promote.

MDT will continue to work with Missouri State Parks, The Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to stay current with the goals and missions of these organizations, and to effectively coordinate efforts to promote the state’s outdoor assets. In conjunction with marketing efforts already in place through the aforementioned organizations, the Missouri Division of Tourism will contribute the following resources to help grow the number of visitors and the amount of revenue that is generated by Missouri’s outdoor product:

- Target outdoor travel writers and bloggers through earned media efforts in order to garner news articles and feature stories in outdoor-specific publications.
- Assist in coordination of outdoor recreation familiarization tours with outdoor travel writers and bloggers.
- Feature state parks, conservation areas and outdoor recreation activities (hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, etc.) on VisitMO.com, VisitMO social media channels, the Missouri Travel Guide and Missouri Tourism email blasts.
- Continue partnership with professional fisherman, Scott Pauley in order to reach outdoor enthusiasts in their own environment. Pauley will continue to act as an outdoor recreation spokesperson on behalf of MDT to promote hunting and fishing.
- MDT will continue to include Missouri’s outdoor recreation assets within paid media campaigns through imagery and copy when appropriate.
- The Missouri Department of Natural Resources and MDT will continue to collaborate with Tom Uhlenbrock, a well-known travel writer formerly with the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, to amplify the Missouri message. Uhlenbrock will contribute articles, blog entries and photos, to help populate VisitMO.com, travel writer pitches, and news releases.

d. Cultural Tourism – As the number of upper-tier cultural centers in Missouri continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important to include cultural tourism as a sub target for MDT. Cultural tourism is defined as traveling to experience places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.

The addition and expansion of cultural tourism destinations and attractions in Missouri not only contributes to new jobs, but also improves the quality of life in an area, and builds community pride.

In FY12 MDT will define a vision for a complete cultural tourism strategy, and determine where the most emphasis should be placed. This niche target will encompass history, heritage and the arts, and address areas in genealogy, agri-tourism, culinary tourism, sustainable tourism and wineries. MDT will establish objectives for the classification of assets, development of partnerships, cross promotion, and marketing priorities.

MDT and Hoffman|Lewis will develop marketing and communication strategies that target these niches at lower costs than the general market advertising. This may include social media, mobile marketing and event-driven promotions and give-aways.

2. Maintain the general market share of voice.

MDT and Hoffman|Lewis will continue to monitor the share of voice by media in each of the target markets, in order to achieve and maintain a top three share-of-voice position among its competitors.

3. Identify cost savings opportunities that would allow for heavier market saturation.

MDT and Hoffman|Lewis will continue to leverage the state in its entirety at every media level possible through the co-op Media Exchange, resulting in additional revenue for the state.

H|L compiles co-op partner media activity to formulate one comprehensive flowchart showcasing the efforts of all partners on behalf of the state of Missouri. Looking at the big picture makes us aware of the efforts being made by all partners to avoid oversaturation in a market and competition between the state message and the message of Missouri CVB's and destinations. When opportunities for enhancement are found, revisions to existing plans may be made.

Compiling this information has allowed H|L greater negotiating power on behalf of the state of Missouri and its partners. In the print medium, H|L has used the combined volume and frequency of participating partners to develop state rates so that all partners can take advantage of highly discounted rates. We will continue researching opportunities to apply this type of negotiating to additional mediums.

Additional cost savings opportunities that may result in heavier market saturation include shared media missions, and joint promotions with Missouri tourism industry partners.

MDT will continue investigating opportunities by which Missouri tourism "real estate" can be sold to industry partners as a way to generate revenue for the Division, thereby increasing the investment that MDT can make in additional advertising and marketing for the state.

In 2012, the focus of these efforts will be in developing a robust email marketing sales component in which industry partners will have the opportunity to purchase advertising space in the email blasts that are deployed by the Division twice per month.

Further research will be conducted to determine where other revenue opportunities exist within the Division's current assets. These may include the Missouri Travel Guide (paid or featured listings), VisitMO.com (paid contests, advertorial or banner ads), Welcome Centers (paid signage), etc. The Division will also investigate the best method for managing/sourcing additional revenue generation components.

4. Investigate opportunities to partner with private sector companies on promotion projects.

In 2011, MDT and Hoffman|Lewis executed a partnership promotion with McDonald's restaurants. This program sought to drive incremental tourism revenues throughout the peak travel season and help destination partners communicate their value offers to as many potential visitors as possible.

In 2012, MDT will continue to seek opportunities like these, which provide MDT with tremendous exposure while decreasing the costs to reach consumers, through leveraging the brands and marketing power of private sector companies.

The opportunity for a second promotion with MCD will be evaluated and reconsidered for the spring/summer travel season in 2012.

Objective B:

Continue to deploy performance-based marketing activities that demonstrate a clear and positive ROI.

Goals

1. Increase the percentage of Established market travelers who are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to visit Missouri by 5% (bringing 2012 percentage to 62%).
2. Increase the percentage of Opportunity market travelers who are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to visit Missouri by 6% (bringing 2012 percentage to 40%).
3. Maintain overall awareness level in 2012 (51%).
4. Increase print medium awareness by 14% (achieve 40% awareness).
5. Maintain cost to reach an aware household (\$0.27)
6. Increase PR awareness levels by 4% (achieve 39% awareness).

Tactics

1. **Update creative as needed, to adjust to and capitalize on market and travel trends.**

The Missouri Division of Tourism and Hoffman|Lewis will continue to monitor the ever-changing market and travel trends in order to develop creative that is effective in resonating with consumers and ultimately motivating them to travel to Missouri.

As the economy changes, resulting in modified consumer spending habits, we know that the tourism industry must be able to adapt and adjust, in order to continue to generate revenue. Ongoing industry research, whether conducted by Missouri, or other industry leaders – helps guide the messaging for the creative. As budgets allow, and where research indicates changing trends, MDT and H|L will concept and develop engaging broadcast, print and online creative that will break through the clutter and motivate travel.

Specifically, MDT and H|L will review the current “Vacation for Less” print campaign to determine if this creative should be revised or redirected for a new concept. Special consideration will also be given to online banner creative, in an effort to keep the concepts fresh and engaging, and increase awareness from both of these mediums.

MDT will continue to pursue the acquisition of quality photo and video assets to use in the marketing and promotion of Missouri as a tourist destination. This is an important tool in showcasing what Missouri has to offer, and generating interest in travel to and within the state.

2. **Place integrated and targeted media in our identified markets.**

Hoffman|Lewis places all TV, print and online for the Missouri Division of Tourism. The advertising plan is designed to keep Missouri top-of-mind as a destination in priority markets and to drive our target audience to VisitMO.com for more information.

SMARI research results have shown us that advertising in multiple mediums is critical to achieve maximum effectiveness. A blend of the following advertising elements will be used to promote Missouri Tourism:

- Television
- Magazines
- Online Banner ads
- Search Text ads

Target Audiences:

- Female travel decision-makers
- Baby Boomers
- Young Families
- African Americans

We will continue to focus strong advertising support in priority markets. Established markets include:

- Cedar Rapids-Waterloo & Dubuque; Champaign & Springfield-Decatur; Des Moines-Ames; Ft. Smith-Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers; Jonesboro; Little Rock-Pine Bluff; Lincoln & Hastings-Kearney; Oklahoma City; Omaha; Paducah-Cape Girardeau-Harrisburg-Mt. Vernon; Peoria-Bloomington; Quad Cities (Davenport-Rock Island-Moline); Rochester-Mason City-Austin; Sioux City; Terre Haute; Topeka; Tulsa and Wichita

The following Opportunity markets will also receive advertising:

- Chicago, Louisville, Memphis and Evansville

We will concentrate our media scheduling during peak travel times, with the majority of activity running in the spring and summer. H|L and the Division will monitor weather and traffic (construction) patterns and adjust media in surrounding markets when deemed necessary to most effectively reach the segments of the audience who can feasibly visit the state.

3. Continue to build on the success of the email marketing program.

In conjunction with the overall advertising campaign, Hoffman|Lewis and MDT will continue the successful Customer Relationship Program that delivers targeted email messages.

The main objective of the email marketing campaign is to continue creating and maintaining on-going relationships with consumers who are interested in traveling to and within Missouri. Through the delivery of highly relevant email messages we will proactively communicate to current and potential travelers according to their areas of interest.

Each email targets a very specific audience according to their demographic profile, as well as areas of travel interest that they indicated when opting in for information from MDT. The creative pieces will be themed, written and art directed according to the following interests:

Arts & Culture
Dining & Wine Country
Family Fun Escapes

Festivals, Concerts, Special Events
Live entertainment/Music
Historical Sites/Civil War/Landmarks
Hunting & Fishing/Camping
Nightlife/Clubs/Casinos
Outdoor Adventures/Hiking/Biking
National & State Parks
Sporting Activities & Golf
Water Sports & Boating

We will continue monitoring the click-thru and view rates of each eblast, thus optimizing the times of the year they are sent, as well as the content.

Growing the number of leads in the email marketing database is a priority for the Division in 2012. MDT will employ several methods to harvest new leads:

- Continue successful permission data campaign through paid media.
- Develop a Facebook tab that will allow consumers to sign up for emails from FB.
- Include email sign-up component in all contests and promotions.
- Offer email sign-up opportunity at the Missouri State Fair.
- Investigate opportunities to purchase qualified lists.

4. Continue supporting successful cooperative partnerships that meet MDT goals.

MDT will continue to team up with qualified destination marketing organizations throughout Missouri to advertise and promote the state's many and varied tourism assets. Through the Cooperative Marketing Program's competitive funding process, MDT selects dynamic marketing projects designed to increase visitation and visitor spending. The Cooperative Marketing initiative, a 50/50 matching funds reimbursement program will focus on the following tactics:

- Encourage industry partners to invest in markets and media that research has shown to be the most appropriate for the Missouri visitor and provide the best return on our mutual investments (reference Objective B, Tactic 2).
- Support qualified performance-driven projects designed to meet MDT goals.
- Approve projects that target an average of 75% or more in out-of-state marketing.
- Analyze opportunities to provide assistance to qualified Missouri DMOs with any enhancement/revisions/coaching of this program to extend the limited marketing reach of the Missouri Travel industry.

Marketing Category Descriptions will include: Marketing to the Leisure Traveler (small project marketing, leisure travel marketing, destination advertising); Marketing to the Media targeting the leisure traveler (public relations); Marketing to the Event Planner (convention marketing and amateur sports marketing), Tourism Research, and the Civil War 150 Promotion Program.

The Jewels program is designed to assist emerging destination marketing organizations in building sustainable organizations. MDT will continue to provide assistance in developing a countywide tourism destination analysis and marketing plan, training in advertising, marketing and promotion, and financial assistance to develop a professional tourism brochure and tourism Web site. The desired outcome is a sustainable tourism DMO that will continue to effectively promote the destination.

The areas to be marketed must have the following available:

Tourism demand generators that can attract potential visitors to travel 50+ miles to visit the destination and/or result in an overnight stay.

An organization that can be developed as the countywide DMO with the expectation to fulfill basic Cooperative Marketing Program requirements with regard to non-profit status and years of tourism marketing to receive program level I certification.

Sufficient staff to perform at least the minimum tourism marketing tasks on a consistent basis.

5. Identify and continue successful communications and public relations activities.

The main objective of the public relations program is to extend the Missouri brand message articulated by the general advertising campaign.

In other words, when the advertising promises an experience, public relations will communicate what that message means to individual consumers through the newspapers, magazines and websites they read as well as in radio and television news programming.

Additionally, we view our media relations efforts as a bridge between mass market awareness and one-to-one communication between the Missouri Division of Tourism and individual consumers and news media outlets. Much of this conversation will take place via social media channels such as the VisitMO Bistro blog, Facebook and Twitter. Specific PR objectives are as follows:

1. Enhance the State's desirability as a visitor destination through innovative public relations strategies.
2. Build rapport and strengthen ongoing professional relationships with news media and travel writers.
3. Position the Missouri Division of Tourism as a strategic partner and go-to resource for the Missouri Tourism industry.
4. Utilize social media platforms as a standard one-to-one communication tool for consumers.

A complete copy of the Missouri Division of Tourism's FY12 Public Relations strategy is on file at the Division office.

6. Identify and continue appropriate group travel activities.

MDT will target affinity and niche market segments via the following tactics in an effort to increase domestic group visitors to Missouri:

- Participate in 2012 BankTravel Conference in Memphis, TN. Goal is to meet/exceed the 24 appointment leads out of 154 prospects from 2011.
- Participate in 2012 Missouri Bank Travel Exchange in Jefferson City. Goal is to meet/exceed 14 regional appointment leads out of 26 bankers.
- Participate in 2012 Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA) Conference in Nashville, TN. Due to budget issues MDT did not participate in FY11 or FY12. In 2011, there were 182 tour operators from 91 companies.

- Research ROI on participation in 2012 Heritage Clubs International (HCI) Peer Group Conference in Rogers, AR. HCI is also a conference for bank travel planners with little overlap of BankTravel members. This would be a first-time event for MDT.

MDT will target tour operators and packaged tour professionals.

The group tour market is changing. Group sizes are now smaller, participants more active and more desirous of choices in activity, meals and even accommodation. Missouri is also seeing growth in intermodal transportation tours where groups are using combinations of flight, AMTRAK, motor coach and in even packaged Mississippi River cruises.

- Participate in the National Tour Association (NTA) Convention to reach the domestic travel trade. Goal is to meet/exceed the 25 tour operator leads from 18 states during one-on-one appointments.
- Participate in the 2012 American Bus Association (ABA) Convention in Grapevine, TX. Goal is to meet/exceed 30 tour operator leads from 20 states generated during the one-on-one appointments.
- Participate in the 2012 Travel Alliance Partners (TAP) Conference in Shreveport-Bossier, LA. In 2011, there were 23 leads generated. Travel Alliance Partners, LLC is a partner-owned organization of 38 premier tour operators in the US and Canada. Currently, Missouri is featured in 10 itineraries including Lewis & Clark, Route 66, Branson Beyond the Ordinary and Great River Road. Goal is to include at least 2 more Missouri-inclusive itineraries in CY12.

MDT will maximize communications to convey Missouri's group tour message to buyers.

Due to Missouri's declining group tour advertising and familiarization budgets it will be vital to rely on the creation and coordination of more complimentary advertising, exposure and editorial opportunities. Similarly, group familiarization and media tours may give way to more targeted individual buyer and media visits that are supported wholly or in part by individual destinations and organizations.

- Create special targeted co-op marketing/advertising opportunities for Missouri industry. FY11 included but not limited to *Leisure Group Travel* magazine distributed to 20,000 group leaders as well as *Group Travel Leader* magazine, which is distributed to 25,000 group travel planners. CY12 plans will be expanded to include American Bus Association's *Destinations* magazine, circulation 18,000.
- Continue to work with Missouri industry to host travel trade and group tour media site visits. FY11 included *Group Travel Leader* magazine, which is distributed to 25,000 group travel planners. In that same vein, domestic group tour media are provided requested editorial. Such FY11 requests include but are not limited to the Missouri section in National Tour Association's *Courier* magazine, circulation 6,000, *Leisure Group Travel* magazine, circulation 20,000 and *North American Group Tour* magazine, circulation 18,000.
- Continue to update and augment VisitMO.com group tour page. Fourteen sample itineraries were added in CY11. The goal is to increase that by ten for CY12. In addition, the creation of a direct mail piece and e-blast to travel trade advising of the updated page

will be implemented.

- Research opportunities and ROI to create new Missouri promotional DVDs for both the student and the adult group tour markets.

The Division will maximize resources by continuing existing partnerships and seeking new partnerships and co-op marketing opportunities.

The demand from the media and travel trade for regional itineraries continues to grow.

- Missouri will continue to be an active partner in the regional marketing organization Grand Central USA. The organization is comprised of Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas.
- Missouri will continue to be an active partner of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission to promote opportunities for visitors throughout the Mississippi River Valley and along the Great River Road.

7. Conduct consumer research to aid in the development of a long-standing brand identity for Missouri Tourism.

It is imperative that MDT develops a consistent brand identity in order to more effectively communicate Missouri's message, and keep Missouri top-of-mind when consumers are making travel decisions.

The Missouri Division of Tourism will work with Hoffman|Lewis and Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. to conduct a series of quantitative surveys to better understand the perceptions about Missouri travel, and determine which attributes best define the Missouri Tourism brand. This research, coupled with existing research, will lead the Division in developing a consistent, compelling and effective brand identity that will include a logo, tagline, and accompanying creative campaign. The creative components of the brand will be developed and executed in FY13.

Objective C:

Continue to embrace and expand the utilization of emerging technologies.

Goals

1. Launch a mobile version of VisitMO.com by March 1, 2012
2. Increase average monthly visits to VisitMO.com by 5% (add approximately 5,000 visits per month)
3. Increase referrals from VisitMO.com to social media channels.

Tactics

1. **Identify and investigate new technologies.**

Interactive marketing has become a central component of MDT's marketing plan. Our approach is to develop innovative and creative online programs with a clear return on investment. The purpose is not just to reach people in another medium, but to actually influence their behavior in measurable ways. We will focus resources on maximizing the effectiveness of the existing interactive assets, to gain the greatest ROI on these investments.

The way people consume information is changing at a break-neck speed. The Missouri Division of

Tourism and Hoffman|Lewis will continue to monitor trends in both the technology realm and within the tourism industry, to stay abreast of new ways to effectively reach our consumers and generate an interest in traveling to Missouri.

2. Continue to maximize and grow the Division's electronic marketing database.

Database marketing allows MDT to customize messages based on visitor interests. Visitors opt-in to receive e-newsletters and select categories of interest so they only receive those newsletters that pertain to their travel preferences. The Division works with database managers to further optimize the lists for maximum impact of the messages. MDT will continue to explore opportunities to enhance its databases through such avenues as purchasing lists, obtaining lists from partners and creating enticing promotions to draw more subscribers.

3. Develop a plan to incorporate more technology within and through the Welcome Centers.

The Missouri Division of Tourism sees great opportunity in the state's welcome centers. We can leverage an existing asset by simply enhancing it through modest technology upgrades and by promoting the service via VisitMO.com and on MoDOT signage:

We believe travelers will be significantly more likely to stop at our Welcome Centers if they have already engaged with our staff electronically. And research indicates that travelers who stop at a Welcome Center spend more money, making this a valuable ROI. These technology implementations may include "tweeting" with Welcome Center staff, QR codes, Facebook promotional tie-ins and mobile messaging.

The Division will also seek to improve the traveler's Welcome Center experience by providing more training for Welcome Center staff, and exploring options to include more computers in Welcome Centers that have public access, and are equipped with WiFi.

4. Continue to enhance the availability of compelling information on VisitMO.com

With nearly 80% of trip planning occurring online, VisitMO.com will continue to serve as the central resource for information and trip planning tools.

VisitMO.com has evolved from a static site of listings, into a dynamic site with a broad range of trip planning capabilities that rival any state tourism entity in the U.S. Significant enhancements to VisitMO.com have resulted in increased visitation and have provided a more effective experience for consumers.

MDT and H|L will continue to enhance VisitMO.com and see the immediate opportunities in areas of adding more rich content (trip ideas and itineraries, travel packages, consumer generated content, expanded events listings and videos) and growing the deals and discounts portion of the site.

5. Continue to analyze new social media portals to identify those that offer significant ROI.

Social media has become an integral messaging platform for the tourism industry. It provides a platform where consumers can interact, recommend and share.

The social media strategy, developed by MDT and Hoffman|Lewis, will harness the power of the consumer to ensure that as a travel destination, Missouri remains familiar and relatable to the consumer while reinforcing the key Missouri Tourism messages.

The social media plan will emphasize sleek graphic design, original programming with Twitter and Facebook API, innovative chats and location-based games and most importantly—real people — making sure that marketing and industry professionals provide seamless interfaces that don't get in the way of consumer-driven recommendations, content and messages.

The social media components that support the proposed advertising campaign cannot simply push messages. Consumers expect and have come to acknowledge that the social media landscape is a space where they can dominate the conversation. The MDT social media plan will engage and harness those conversations to provide a community of consumers, who will come to know, visit, share and then revisit the Missouri Tourism brand.

As the social media landscape continues to grown and change, MDT and H|L will investigate these new portals for opportunities where we can share our message with the proper audience, in a relevant and engaging setting.

MDT will also work to allocate proper staff and partner resources in order to ensure that the social media beast is being fed. The social media platforms require constant monitoring and engagement from the Missouri Division of Tourism and H|L, and it is critical that postings, tweets, images and updates, are being refreshed regularly.

6. Develop and launch a mobile version of VisitMO.com.

With more than 15,000 visitors viewing the site via a mobile device each month, VisitMO.com needs a display geared to these users that is intuitive and efficient. Integration of mobile-ready information and advertising is a smart and simple way to reach an audience when it matters most — while traveling in Missouri.

MDT and Hoffman|Lewis view a mobile version of VisitMO.com as a high priority.